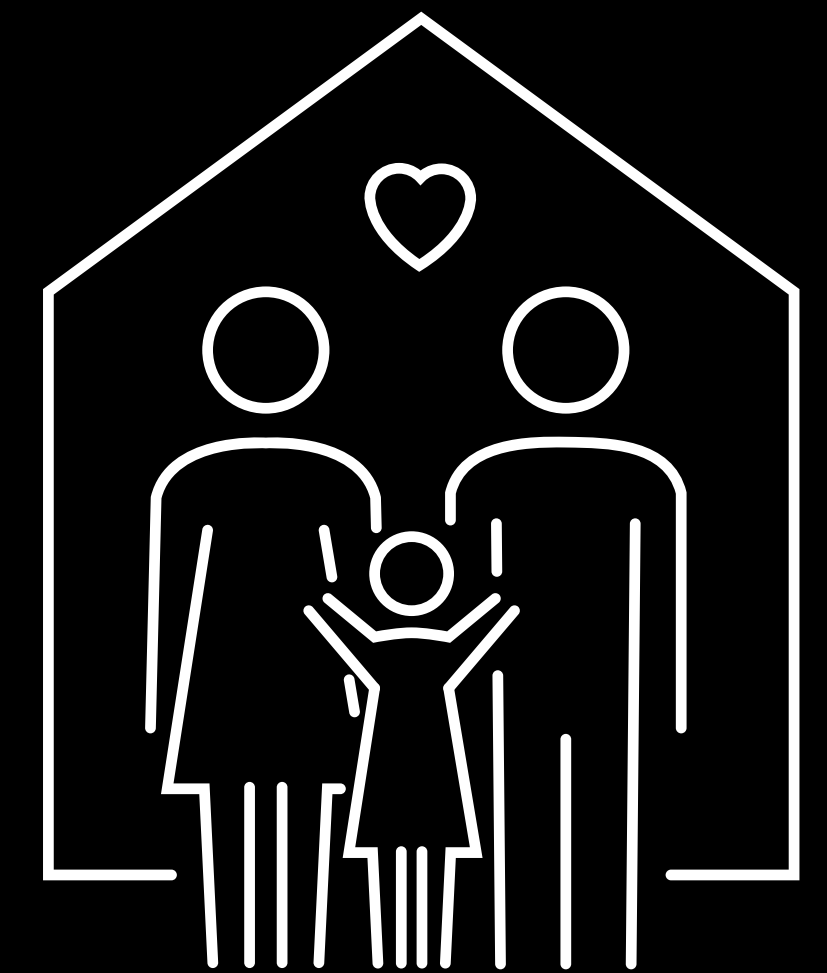
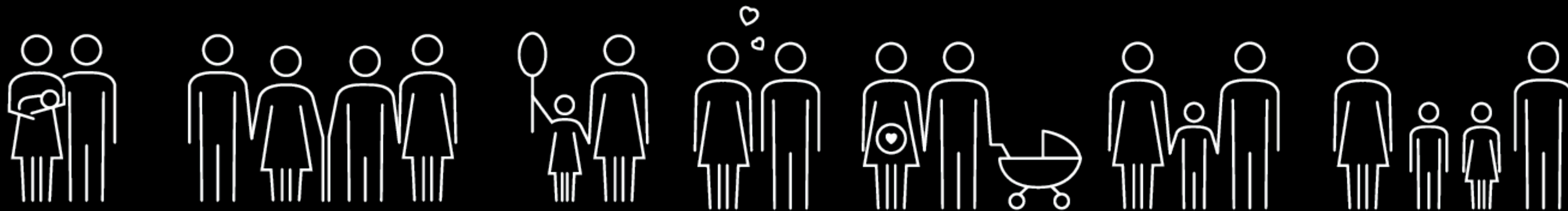


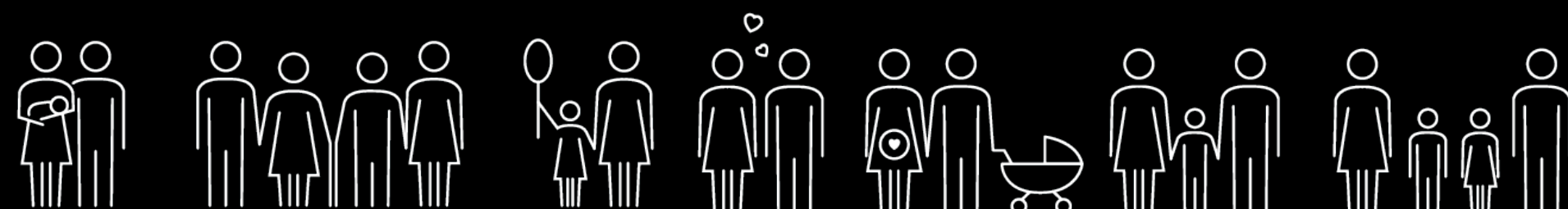
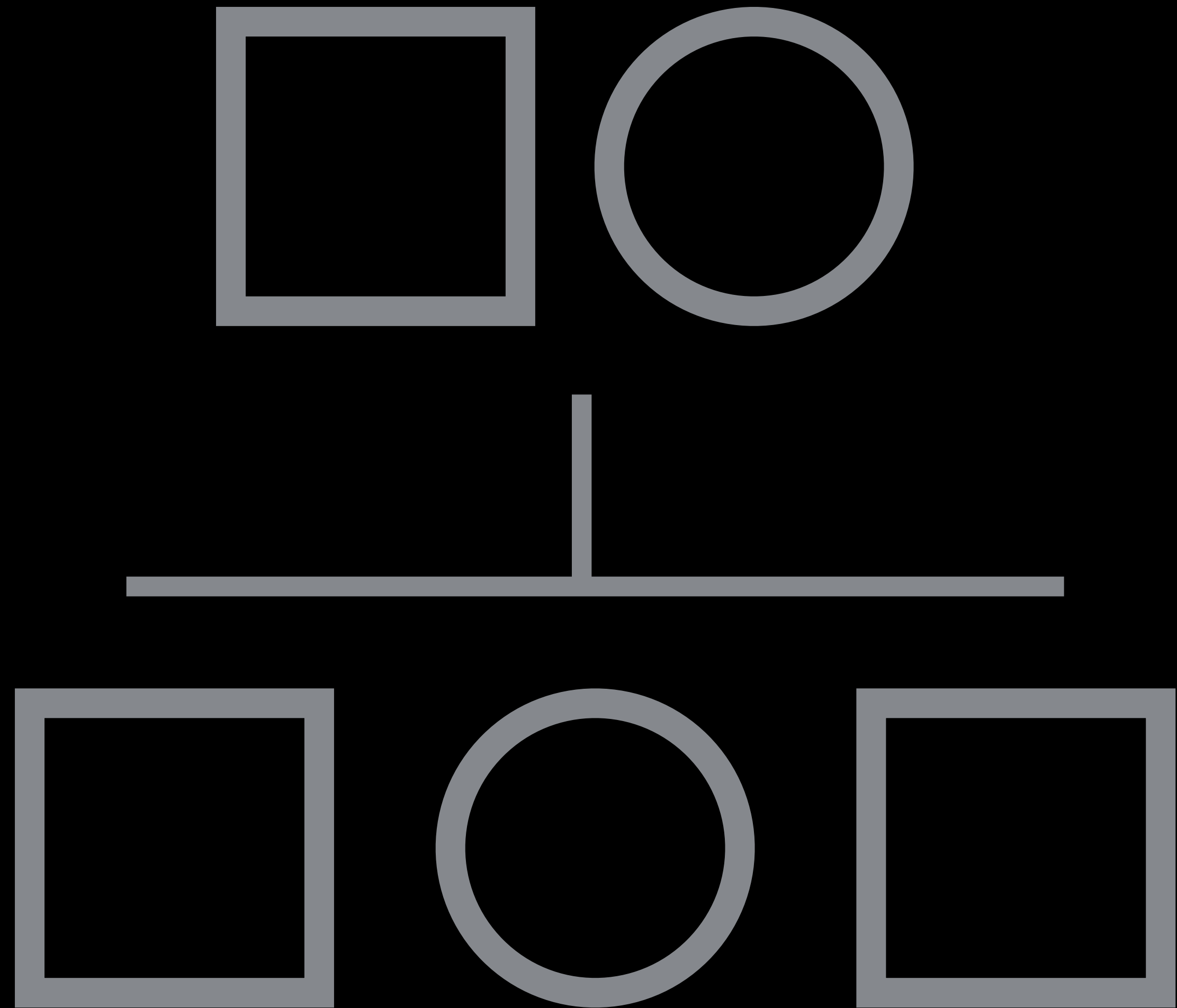
# Working with Families Part I:

## Understanding and Assessing Families



Jacob Campbell, Ph.D LICSW at Heritage University for SOWK 487 in Spring of 2025

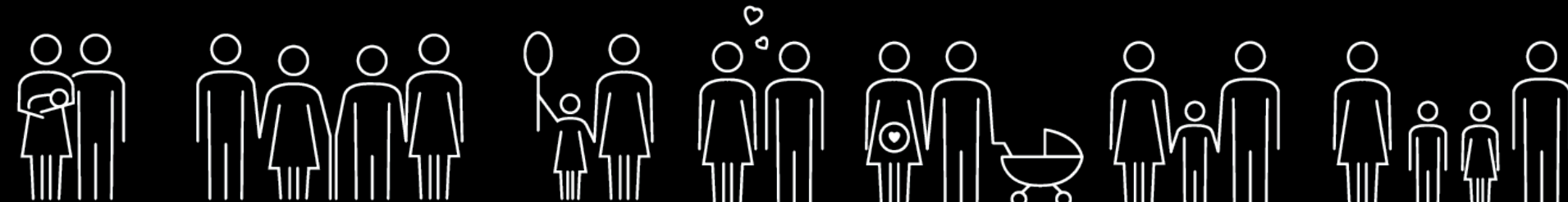
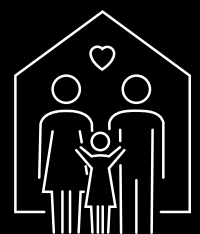
# Genogram Cutout Activity



# Agenda

Strengths perspective and families

Engagement and assessment with families



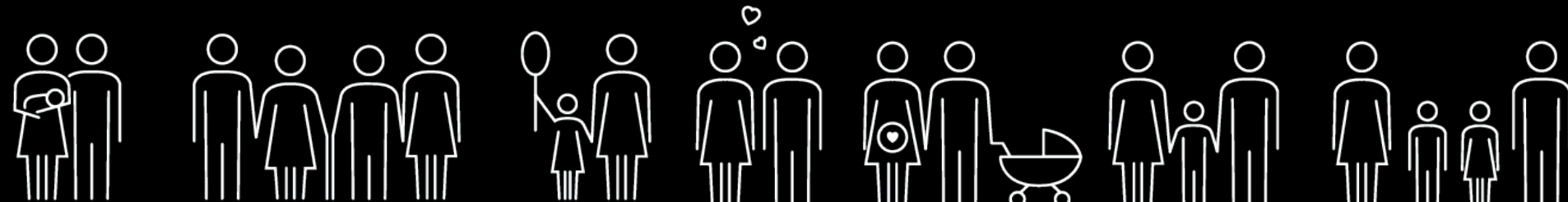


# Identifying Family Strengths

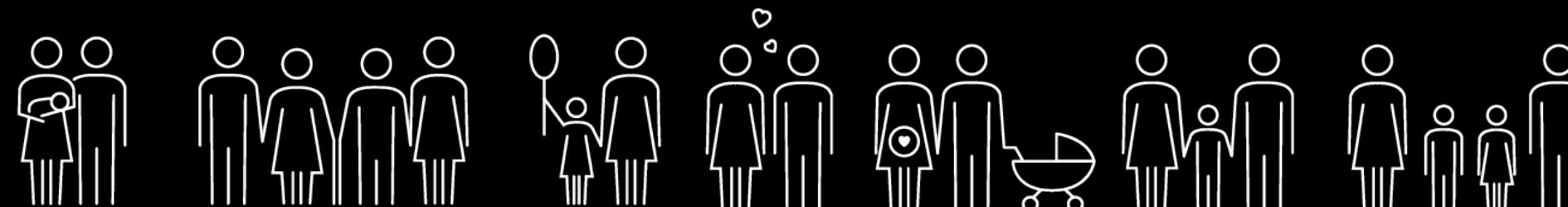
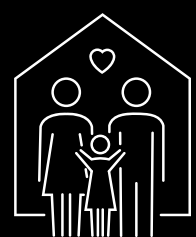
Note 12 to 15 positive aspects of the household pictured

(National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, 2007)

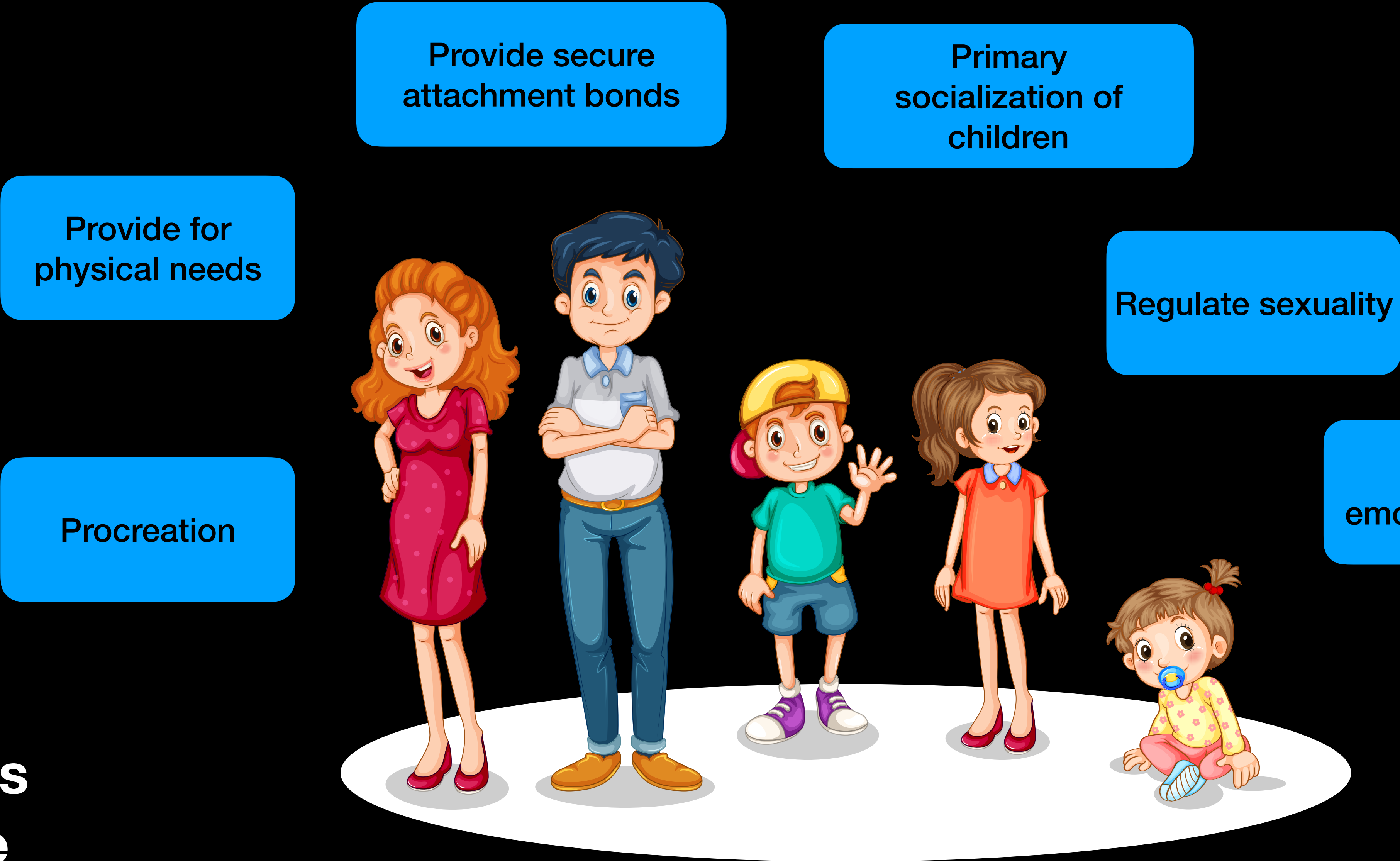
# What Families Provide



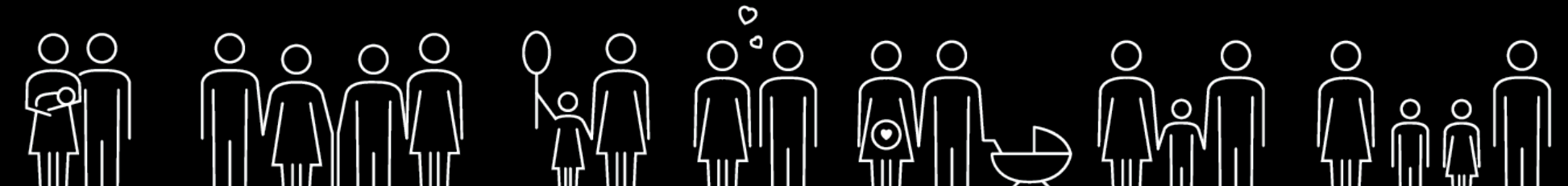
# What Families Provide



# What Families Provide



(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)

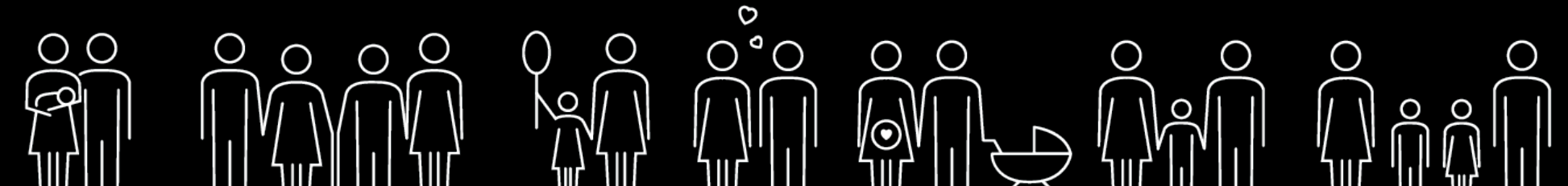
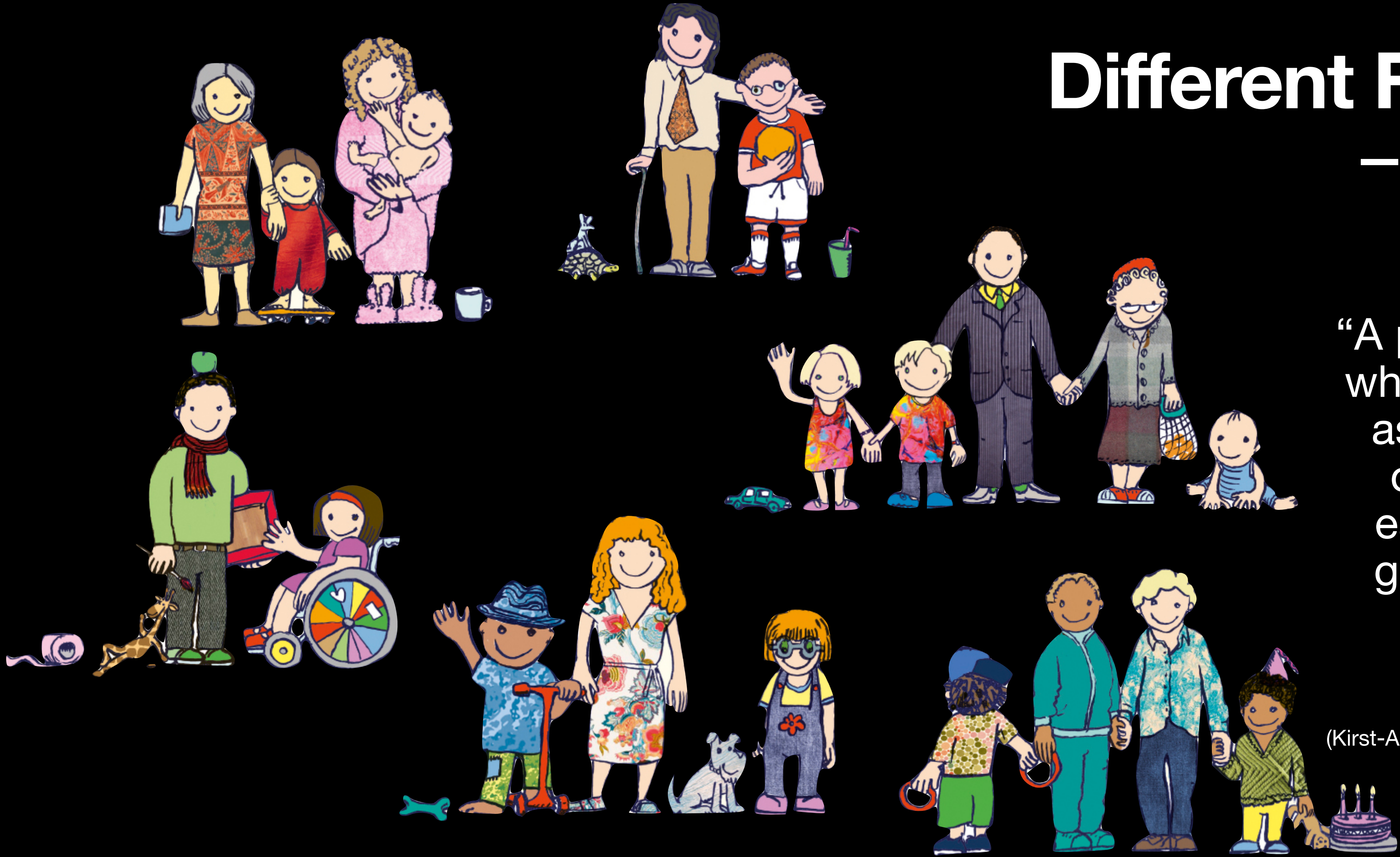


# Different Families

— Same Love

“A primary group whose members assume certain obligations for each other and generally share common residences.”

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015, p. 331)





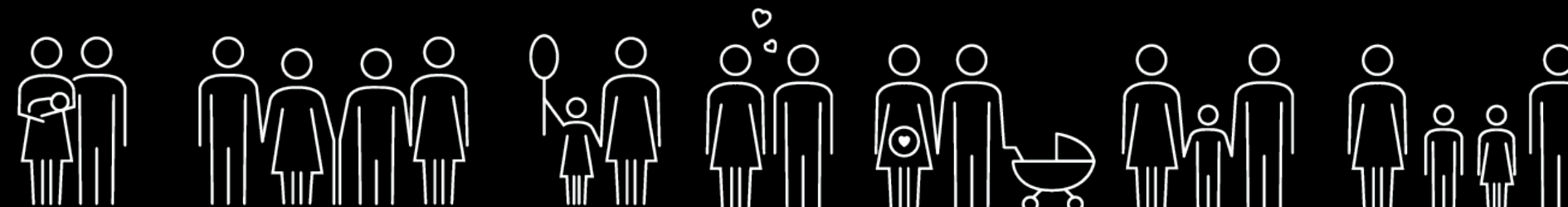
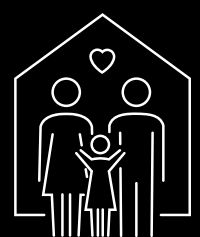
# Family Systems Framework Assessment

## Dimensions

- Homeostasis
- Boundaries and Boundary Maintenance
- External Family Boundaries
- Enmeshment and Disengagement
- Family Decision Making, Hierarchy, and Power
- Family Roles
- Communication Patterns in Families
- Family Life Cycle
- Family Rules
- Social Environment
- Family Adaptive Capacity (Stressors and Strengths)

Review the Handout Applying Family Systems Framework Assessment. What kind of things might you expect to hear in each of these areas?

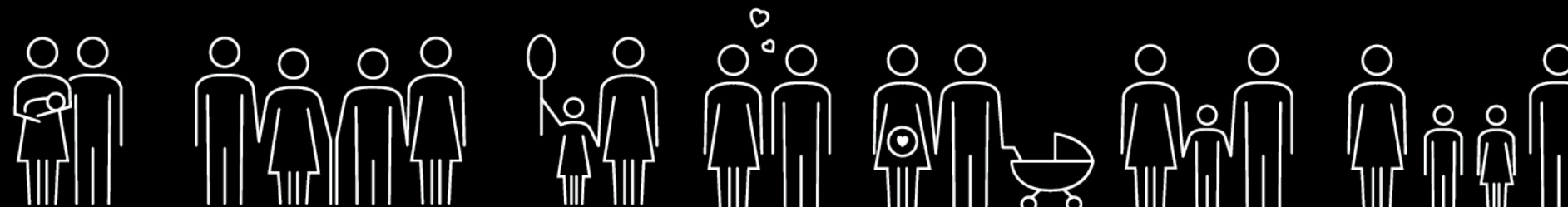
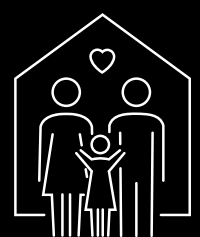
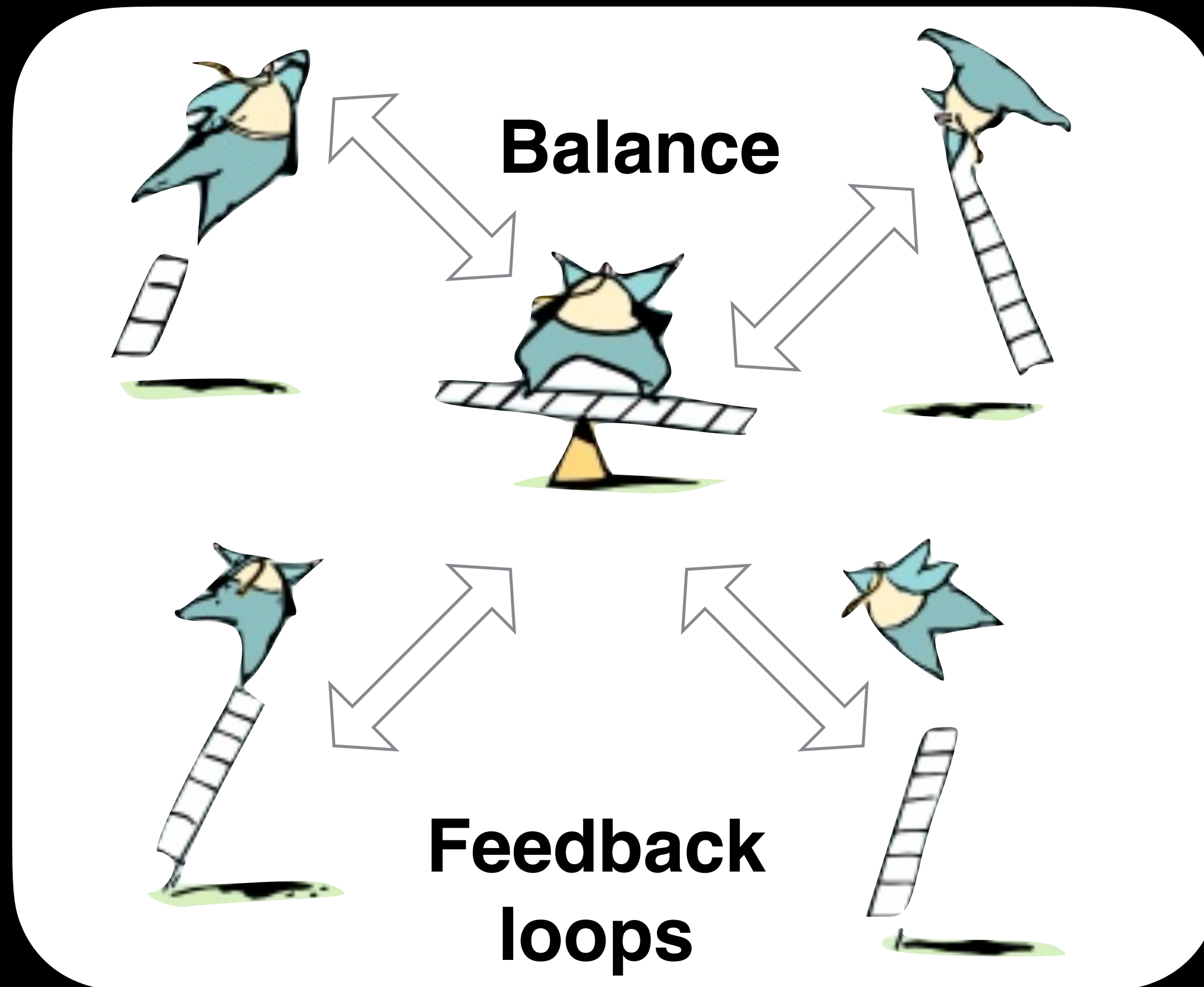
(Hepworth et al., 2022)



# Homeostasis

“Families may try to maintain the status quo in response to family transitions in the life cycle or stressors associated with abrupt change to the family system itself (e.g., death, divorce, a new addition to the family, an abrupt move), or environmental events such as immigration or move to a new location, or changes in daily routines”

(Hepworth et al., 2022, p. 196)



# Boundaries & Boundary Maintenance

**Disengagement**

diffused boundaries

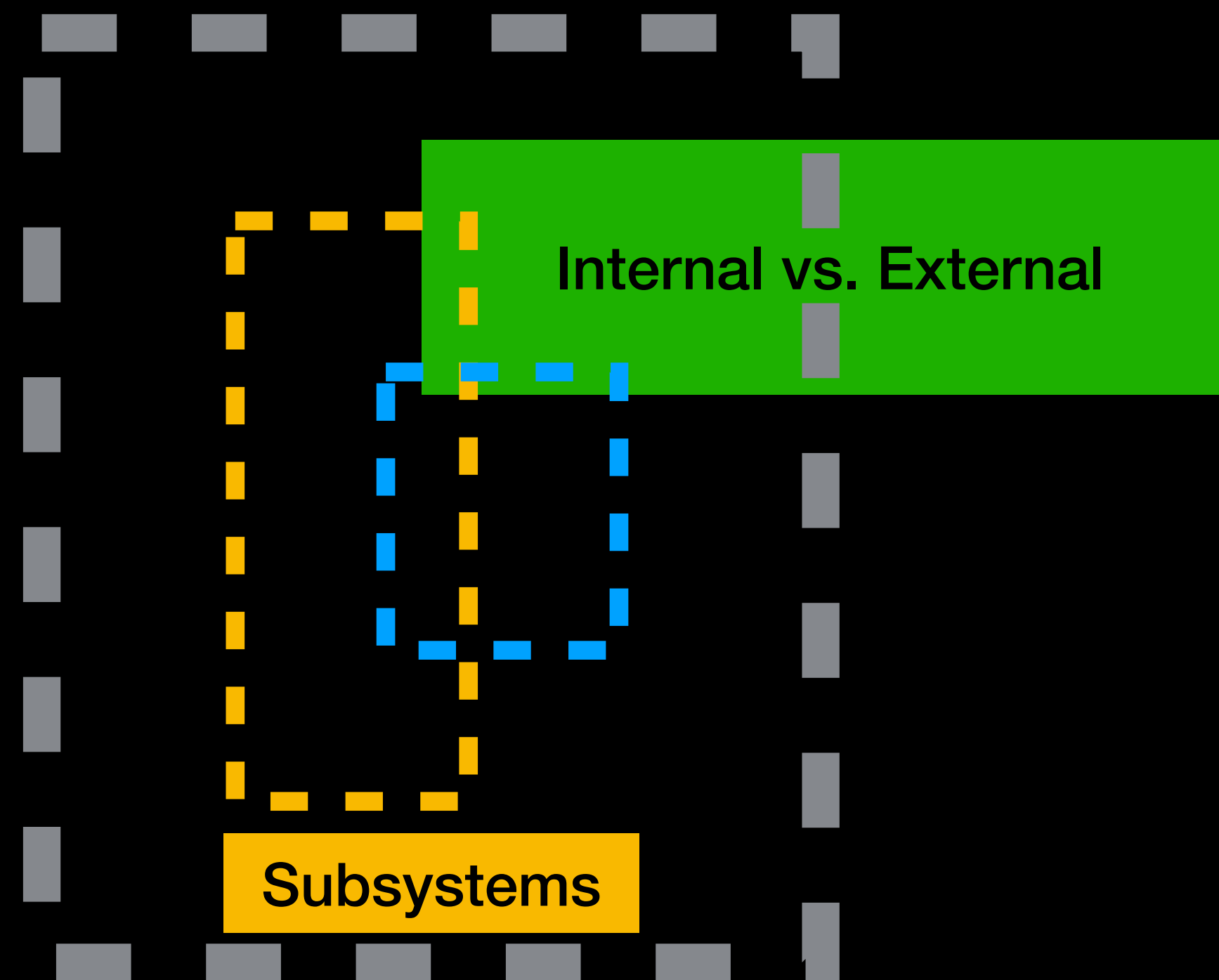


**Enmeshment**

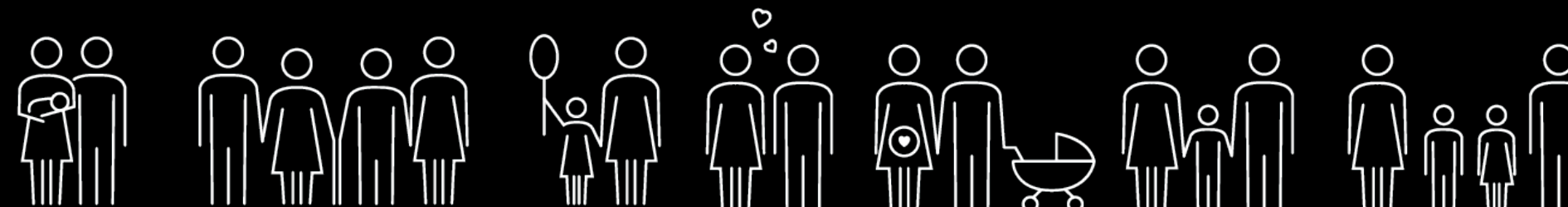
inappropriately rigid

Unique

families unique style,  
cultural preferences,  
strengths, and needs



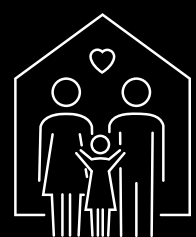
(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)



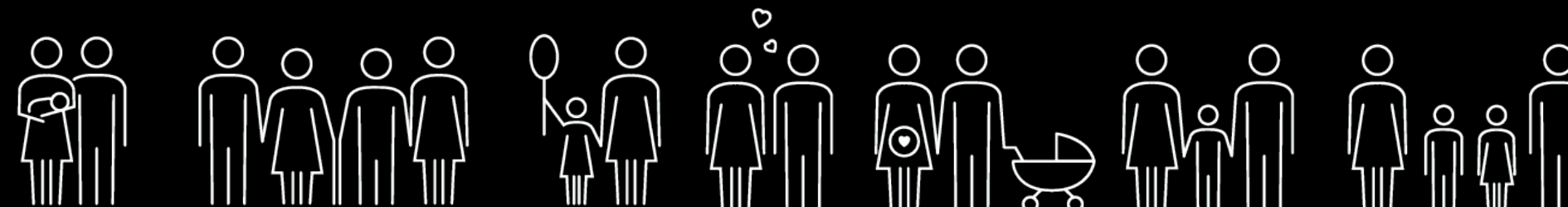
# Family Decision Making, Hierarchy, and Power

- Historic / Context
- Reason for distribution
- Covert power
- Power flexibility
- Family perspective

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)

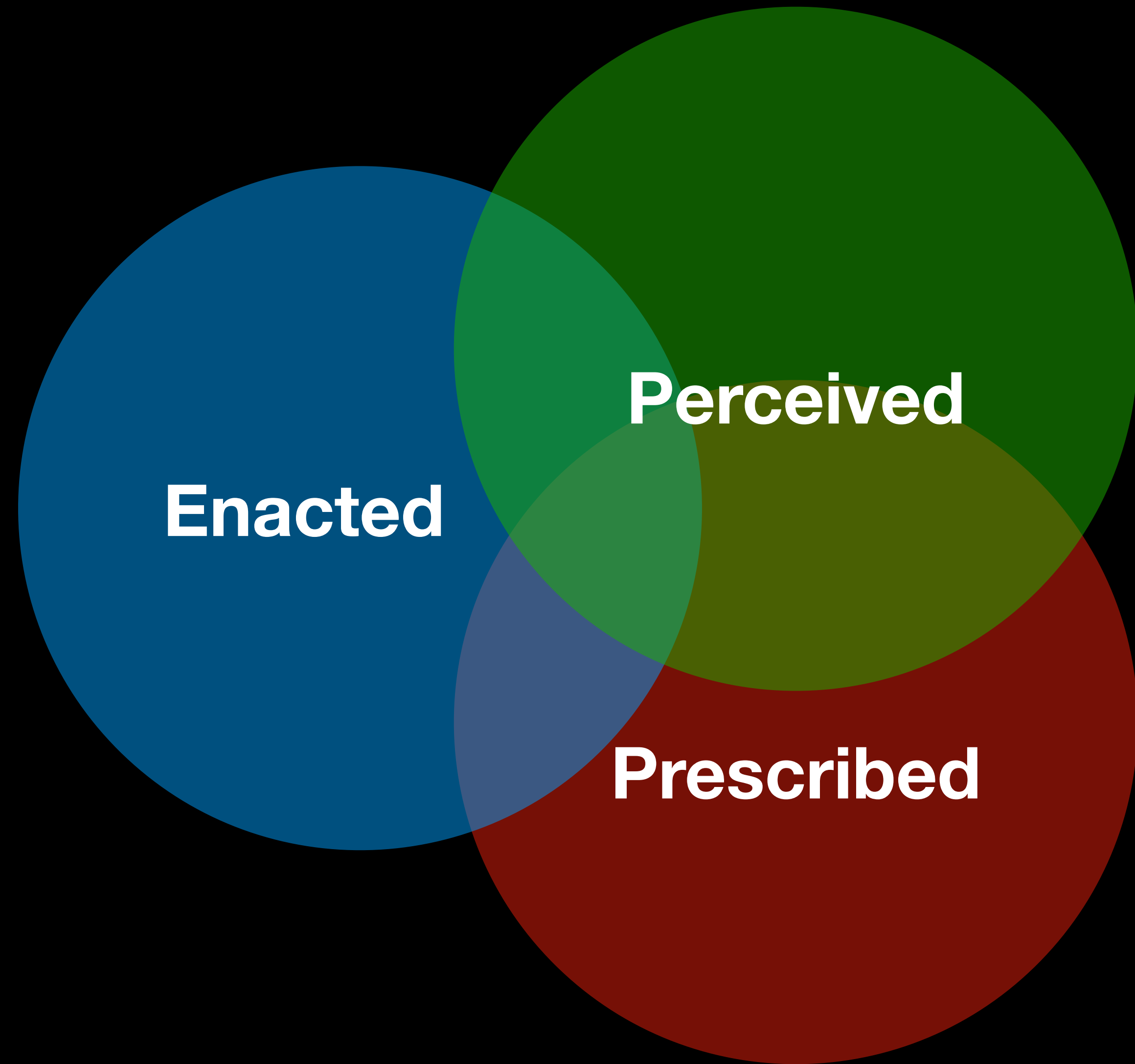


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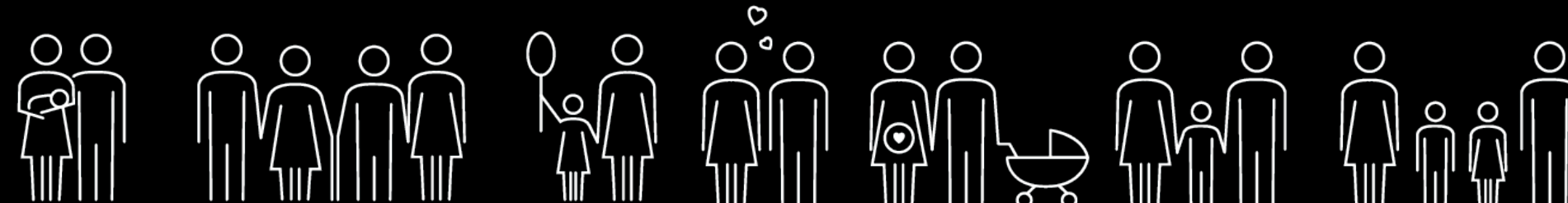


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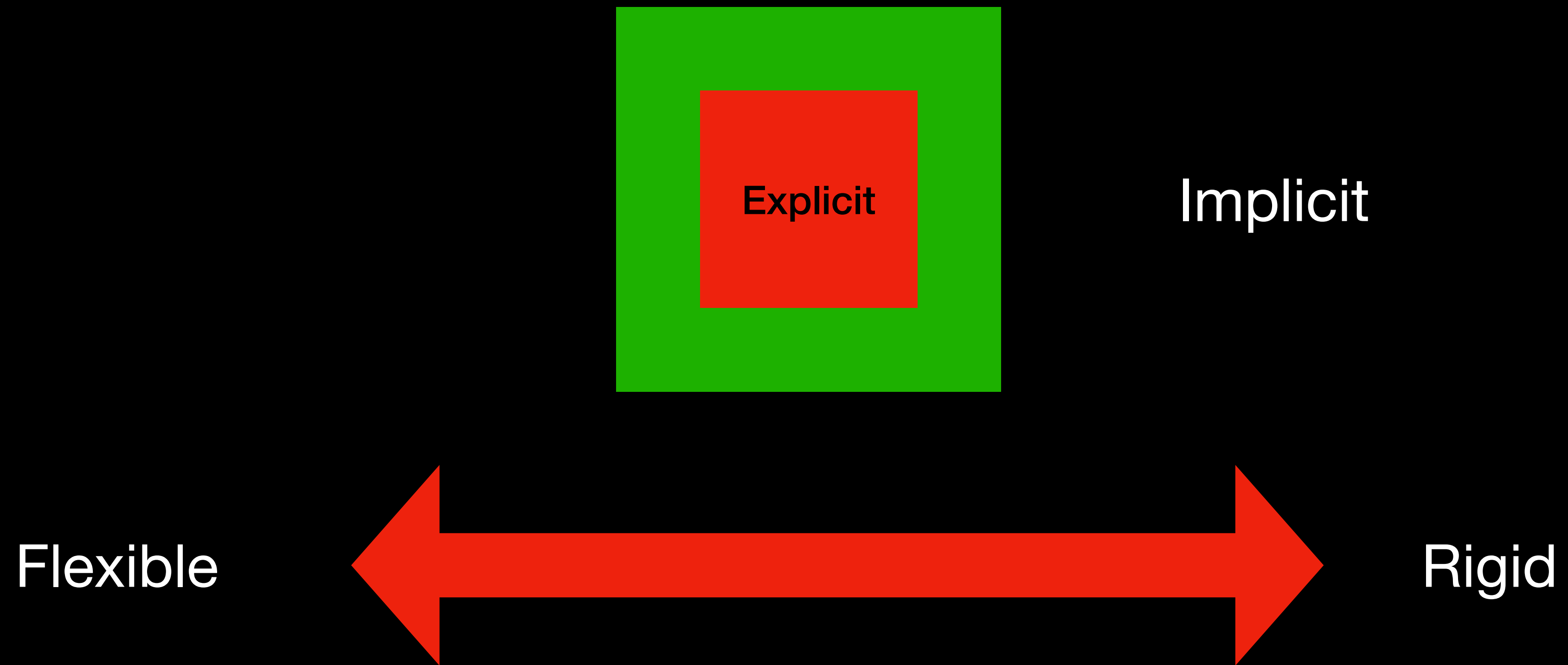
# Family Roles



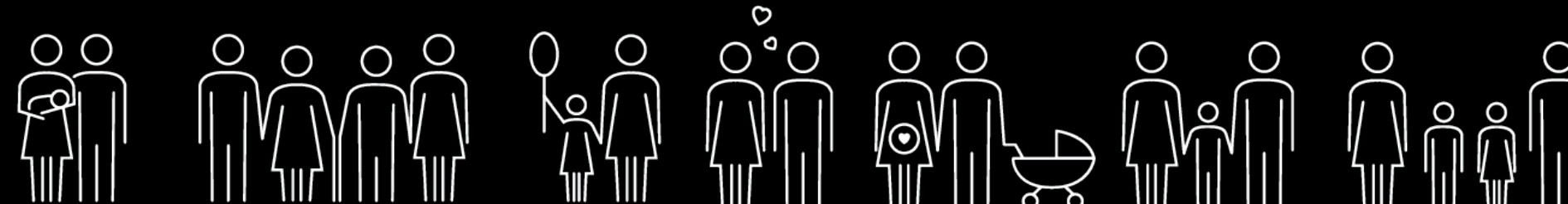
(Hepworth et al., 2022)



# Family Rules

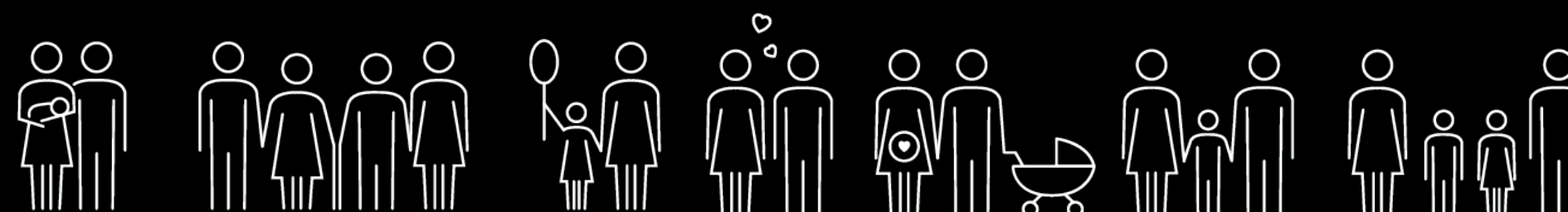


(Hepworth et al., 2022)

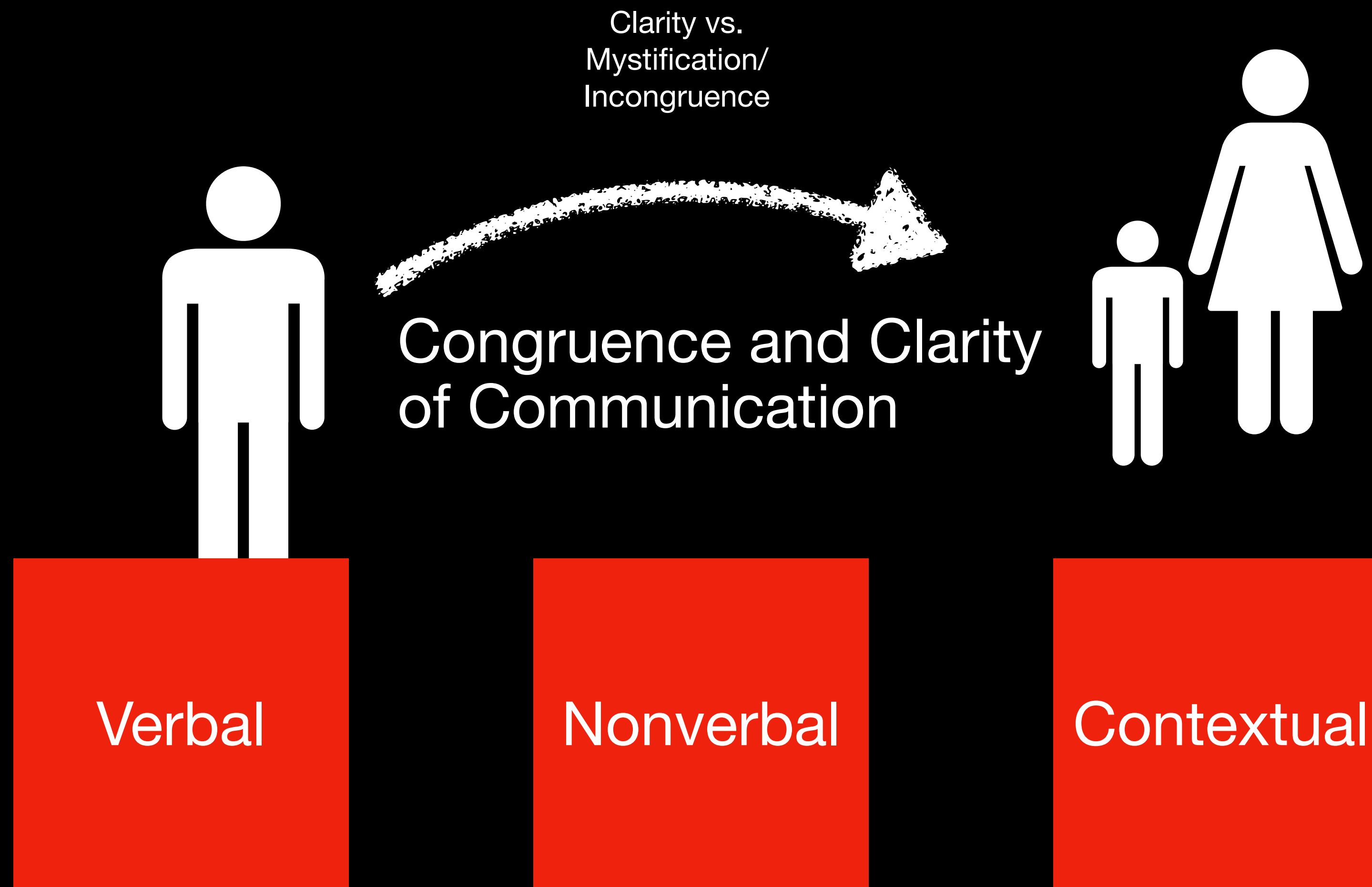


# What About Your Family?

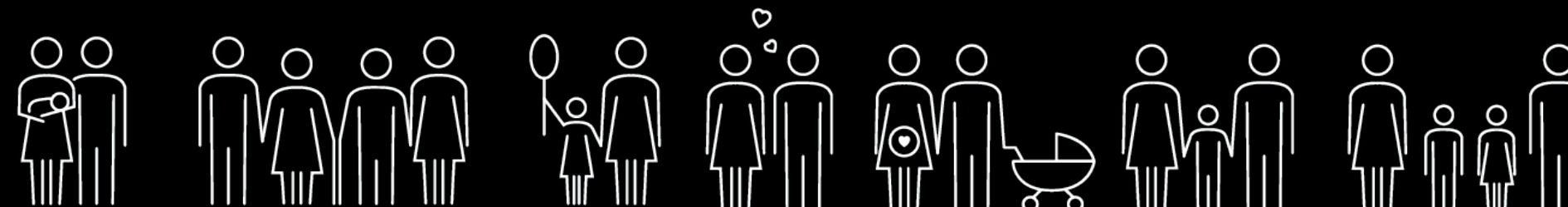
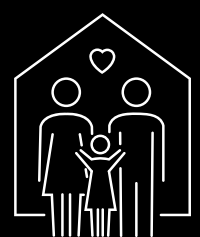
**Members**  
**Roles**  
**Norms**  
**Values**  
**Rules**



# Communication Styles of Family Members



(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)

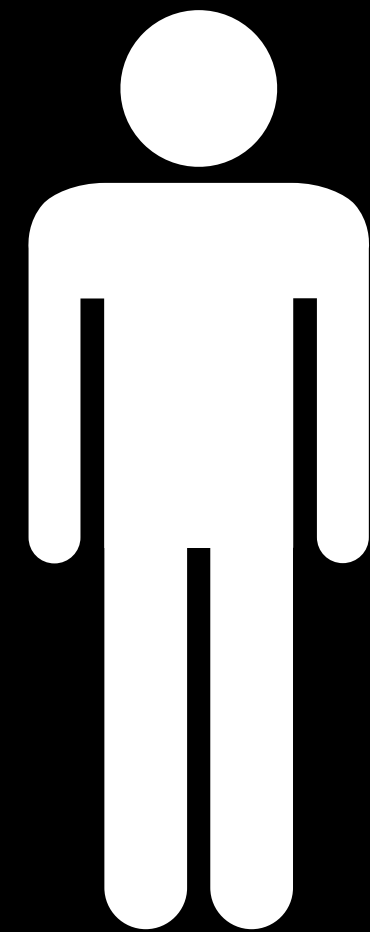




# Communication Styles of Family Members

## Sender Skills

Using "I messages"  
verses "You..."



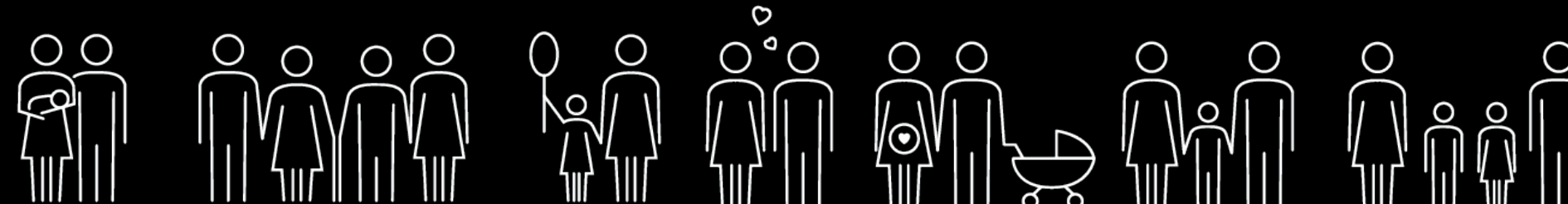
Congruence and Clarity of Communication



## Receiver Skills

Physical attending  
Paraphrasing  
Responses that elicit  
clarification  
Brief responses

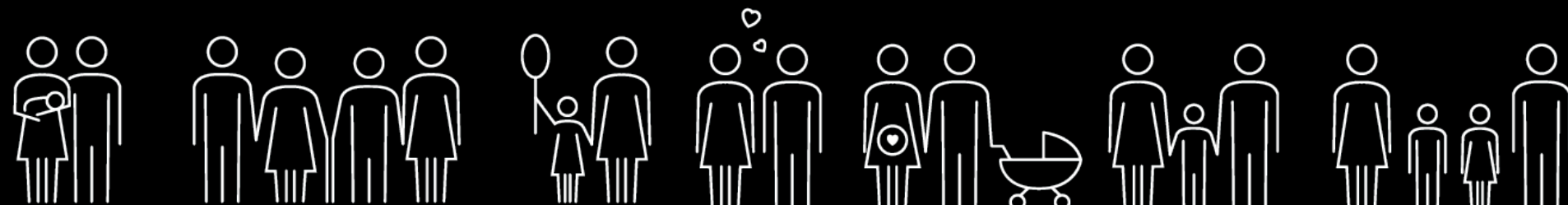
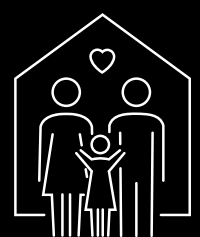
(Hepworth et al., 2022)



# Communication Styles of Family Members

## Insoo Kim Berg Solution-Focused Family Therapy Video

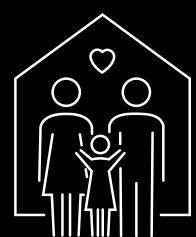
(PsychotherapyNet, 2009)



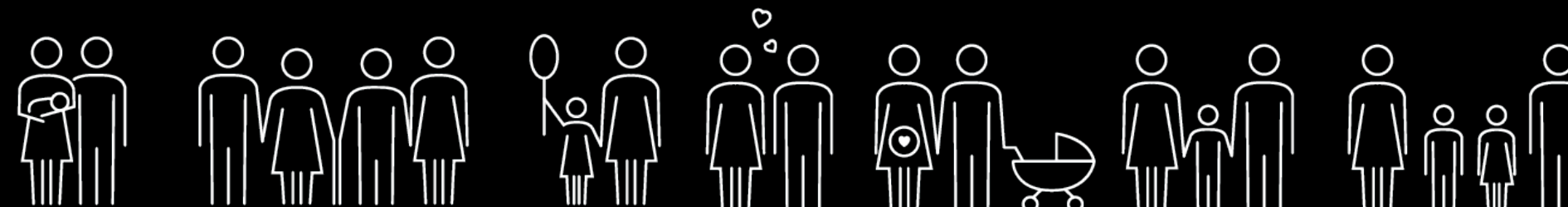
# Family Life Cycle

1. Unattached young adult
2. New couple
3. Family with young children
4. Family with adolescents
5. Family that is launching children
6. Family in later life

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)



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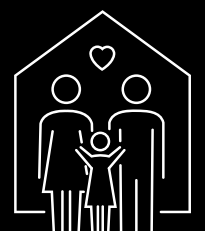


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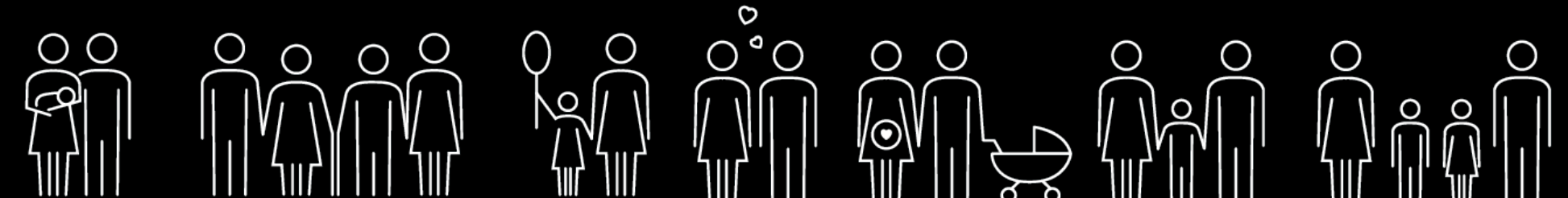


# Social Environment

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)



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# Family Adaptive Capacity

Family Stressors

Family Strengths & Resilience

Family Cycle  
Frequency and Duration  
Magnitude and Number

Social support  
Internal cohesion and commitment  
Creativity and flexibility  
Appraisal, insight, and meaning  
Initiative and achievement  
Boundary setting

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)

